

AUTUMN 2020



# Singleton Edit



SINGLETON  
COUNCIL

SPECIAL BICENTENNIAL EDITION





## From the Mayor

It's been a difficult start to 2020 and one that reinforces, yet again, the power of human spirit in overcoming even the most devastating of circumstances.

The fires that ravaged NSW, Victoria and South Australia directly impacted people in our community who experienced the threat either on their own doorsteps in our local government area, or who were visiting in other areas. I acknowledge the volunteer firefighters who put their own festivities and commitments on hold for weeks and months to come to the aid of others, and the outpouring of support and assistance that is overwhelming, yet unsurprising.

It's this spirit of community and resilience that has shaped our nation, and there are countless examples of triumph over struggle told in the stories of the people who quite literally handcrafted the foundations for the Singleton local government area we know today.

The fact we are here to commemorate Back to Singleton 2020 after thousands of years of Wonnarua/Wanaruah custodianship of the land, and 200 years since European exploration brought agriculture and rapid development, shows our community is in itself a symbol of what hard work and perseverance can achieve.

The Back to Singleton 2020 events program, developed and curated by our community, is a living showcase of what is special about Singleton, and the ongoing importance of our area as a centre for history and heritage, an industry leader in innovation, a beacon for the arts, culture and sport, and our ongoing connection to the land.

The commemorations began with Twilight and our annual Australia Day festivities in January, and will continue throughout 2020 with a range of events to suit everyone – from vintage tennis and high teas through to tours of advanced manufacturing. There's also the opportunity to experience the marriage between the most modern of creativity in a "living sculpture" with the craftsmanship and tradition of one of our most historic homesteads at Hambledon Hill.

And of course, there'll be Singleton Homecoming on John Street on Friday 13 March, free family fun on Civic Green at the Singleton Day Out on the afternoon of Saturday 14 March, and I invite you to buy your tickets to join us for some old-time glamour at the Singleton Soiree to follow. You'll find all the information you need, including the full program, on Council's website.

Back to Singleton 2020 is a timely occasion to bring us together to honour the past, embrace all that we have in common and dream a shared vision for the prosperous future of our area. It's an open invitation to everyone to come home, come back or come to experience all that is special about Singleton.

Sue Moore | Mayor

## From the GM

In the year that we pause to look back and commemorate the people and cultures that have shaped our local government area, the bicentennial of the European exploration of Singleton is also a powerful reminder that what we're doing now will have an impact for generations to come.

There are a number of reasons why 2020 will be a significant year in our history, not least because of the Back to Singleton 2020 program that will see a host of whole-of-community events held throughout the year.

2020 will be a year of ongoing challenges, starting of course with the bushfire emergency and the impacts of the ongoing drought. Water restrictions have become a normality for our community, and we have seen an overwhelming response from residents who have embraced a new consideration for the way we use water. At the time of publication, a report was due to be presented to Council's ordinary meeting this month for Councillors to consider moving to level 2 restrictions.

As an organisation, we're also reviewing the way we use water and harnessing the innovation of our staff to save water in our own operations, including the completion of a water recycling system at the sewer treatment plant. This new technology means that what was one of Council's biggest users of water is now one of the most efficient, with water savings amounting to one-third of the size of an Olympic swimming pool in the first week of operation alone.

The focus on capital works will continue with a number of significant projects that will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits to our community, in particular the Town Centre Upgrade - Stage 2. The concept designs were unveiled for your feedback at the end of 2019, and tenders for construction will be called later this year. We understand there are concerns about impacts when construction begins, and that's why we're already communicating with businesses and why measures to minimise disruptions will be a key consideration in the selection of a successful tenderer to undertake the works.

But perhaps most significantly, we're laying the groundwork to hold meaningful conversations with you about your vision for Singleton for the next 10 years and beyond with the development of a new Community Strategic Plan. With a new Council to be elected in September, and as we reflect on the achievements over the current term of Council and further back to the people of the Wonnarua/Wanaruah and those pioneers who began our relationship with this land, it's an ideal time to consider Singleton's place in the world for the generations who will commemorate our tricentenary.

Jason Linnane | General Manager



James Smith had a helping hand in the creation of the Dale Frank Botanical Gardens

## HISTORIC UNVEILING FOR LIVING ART

He might be best known for pushing conceptual boundaries with abstract artworks and sculptures exhibited in New York, Venice, Pisa and Boston, but Dale Frank's latest creation is the first stage of his very own botanical gardens set to be unveiled as part of Singleton's Bicentennial commemorations.

Dale will open up his 18 hectare property, the historic Hambledon Hill on 15 March 2020 to reveal a "living sculpture", with a dry garden filled with the intriguing textures of agave, cactus and succulents as well as enormous aloes, yuccas, prickly pears, dragon trees, and canary island palms.

Having meticulously renovated the sandstock-brick homestead before adding a sympathetic extension and external studio, the opening of stage one of the garden will also be the 10-year anniversary since Dale began planting with the assistance of his son-in-law, James Smith.

"I started planting a decade ago, and really started to plan the garden about five years ago," Dale said.

"There's an awful lot of species that I want, but you can't get into Australia. I brought in a lot of seeds from Africa and found a selection of plants from arid climates, or climates with unreliable rainfall, and used them to design a garden.

"You plant trees first, which makes the skeleton, and you develop natural pathways that humans follow, with plants either side.

"I have always appreciated landscape design, landscaped gardens, rather than domestic-size gardens. I am inspired by several overseas designers and traditional gardens such as Huntington and Ruth Bancroft in the United States."

The community has come together to create a year-long program of events for Back to Singleton 2020, including a tour of global industrial leader Hedweld at Mt Thorley, vintage tennis and croquet, a Singleton Hospital staff reunion and a special bicentennial year of events at Sacred Spaces at the Sisters of Mercy. See the full program on page 8.

Dale said opening the garden as part of Back to Singleton 2020 was the perfect opportunity to gauge community interest in visiting.

"We will have guided tours every hour, but eventually the aim is to develop the garden further and the paths will form a natural walking area," he said.

"I hope people get enjoyment from the gardens, and come away with the idea that you can plant things that are out of the ordinary and that don't have to be labour-intensively looked after and watered."





Mayor of Singleton Cr Sue Moore, Singleton Bicentennial Commemorations Working Party members Cliff Bryson, Peggy Moore and John Flannery with General Manager Jason Linnane

It's a commemoration 200 years in the making, and the Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore is encouraging everyone to be part of Singleton's bicentennial this year.

The bicentenary marks the arrival of the European exploration party, led by John Howe and with the assistance of two Aboriginal trackers, Myles and Mullaboy, at modern-day Whittingham on 15 March 1820.

The expedition was the culmination of several failed attempts to find an overland route between Windsor and the Hunter River valley under the instruction of Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

Members of the party were rewarded with land grants, and their names still echo in the local government area today – particularly Benjamin Singleton, whose land grant at the bend in the river would become the nucleus for the township.

"This is an opportunity for us to showcase all that is special about Singleton and what the people from our area have achieved since this land sustained first the people of the Wonnarua/Wanaruah, and then our early pioneers," Cr Moore said.

"There's no disputing Singleton played an immensely important role in the establishment of the colony of NSW

and the nation of Australia, and the importance of our area to the State of NSW continues today.

"I hope as many people as possible will come together to commemorate this significant milestone at any number of the wonderful events on the Back to Singleton 2020 program throughout the year."

Cr Moore said as well as honouring the past, the bicentennial year was also focused on the future as Singleton Council worked closely with the State and Federal governments on a number of issues to safeguard Singleton's economic importance and ensure the area continued to be a destination for people to live, work and

visit. "As part of a family with long ties to this area, I am committed to building on the hard work that has been done before us," she said.

"I hope John Howe and Benjamin Singleton, and everyone who was part of that European exploration party in 1820, might look at us today and be proud of what Singleton has become, and support our efforts to ensure it will continue to thrive into the future." ■

**FULL PROGRAM: PAGE 8 or [singleton.nsw.gov.au](http://singleton.nsw.gov.au)**



# COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE IN POSITIVE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

With a positive operating performance for the second consecutive year and continued above-benchmark results, Singleton Council's latest State Government measures show why the community can have confidence in Council's operations.

Anthony Egan, Council's Director Business and Community Services said the organisation had stepped up financial management over the past several years with a focus on ongoing sustainability and efficiency to streamline costs – without compromising the standard of service delivery.

The result has been another favourable Statement of Performance Measures for 2018/2019, including a strong operating performance ratio for the second consecutive year, and early indications are the current financial year will follow suit.

The operating performance ratio measures how Council contained its spending within operating revenue.

"Council's financial position as at 30 June 2019 has seen favourable results in regards to Council's key performance indicators, with a positive operating performance ratio of 4.66 per cent – well above the benchmark of zero per cent – which means Council is keeping its spending within its income," Mr Egan said.

"In addition, Council's own source of operating revenue ratio stands at 77.23 per cent, exceeding the benchmark set at 60 per cent, demonstrating that Council has a low reliance on external funding sources such as grants and contributions."

Other results showed Council exceeded the industry benchmark for its ability to meet short-term liabilities by 1.5 times, and continued to maintain a high level of debt service cover ratio at 9.98, well above the industry benchmark of 2.

Mr Egan said the results were a positive picture for Council's long-term financial goals.

"Council is working towards long-term financial sustainability, while ensuring our residential rates are below the average rates payable across Hunter councils," he said.

"There's a continued focus on improving efficiencies within the organisation to ensure we can deliver the same level of service, if not better, at a lower cost to the community.

"We are constantly looking at ways we can improve service delivery so that we can enhance our financial results in the years to come, and most importantly our community can be assured they are getting good value out of their local council."

# EMERGENCY EXPO OF APPRECIATION



Jesse Roberts from Singleton SES, Danny Eather from the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, Hans Schryver from the Salvation Army, Acting Inspector Steve Benson from NSW Police Force and Joel De'Zuna from NSW Ambulance

There'll be an emergency and first responders on the scene – but the real urgency is to be at the Singleton Emergency Services Expo on Saturday 28 March.

Singleton Council is joining forces with emergency services including NSW Police, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, the State Emergency Service and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter to demonstrate the skills and expertise of first responders in an emergency.

But most importantly, it's an opportunity for people to learn how to be best prepared.

Singleton Council General Manager Jason Linnane said the event would be held at Civic Park from 9am to 12pm, with real-life emergency simulations.

"There'll be a range of displays from all of our emergency services, including simulations where our first responders will demonstrate their skills and experience in just what happens in an emergency event," he said.

"And given the bushfire emergency situation we experienced over the past few months, it's a great opportunity to talk to the experts about how to prepare your family and your home in the event of a fire or flood.

"You just don't know when you'll need assistance from our emergency services, and this is a fun morning out with a very serious message about how to be prepared."

The Salvation Army will be serving up hot dogs and beef rolls, and there'll also be a coffee van and ice cream truck.

Mr Linnane said the expo was a great way to meet the people in our community who are there to respond in emergencies.

"We've seen up close the commitment and dedication of our emergency services personnel and volunteers to keeping people safe this summer, and helping those in need in the worst situations of their lives," he said.

"The expo puts names and faces to the people who are there to help you when things get bad, including the hundreds of people who helped to fight the fires that have threatened our community since November 2019.

"This is a chance for all of us to come together as a community and say thanks."

The Singleton Emergency Services Expo will be held on Saturday 28 March 2020 at Civic Park from 9am to 12pm. Entry is free.

Back to  
Singleton  
2020

singleton.nsw.gov.au



## PLAN YOUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR

13 MARCH 2020

14 MARCH 2020

14 MARCH 2020

Free event  
SINGLETON  
Homecoming

STREET PARTY

Free event  
SINGLETON  
Day Out

FAMILY - FRIENDLY FUN

tickets on sale  
SINGLETON  
SOIREE

OLD-TIME  
COCKTAIL GLAMOUR



You can purchase tickets to Singleton Soiree at [www.stickytickets.com.au/pz250](http://www.stickytickets.com.au/pz250) or at Council's Administration Building and Visitor Information Centre.



Singleton Edit



# EVENT PROGRAM

## Singleton Woodworkers Club Open Night

Singleton Showground  
18 February | 5.30pm-8.30pm

## Seniors Festival Expo + High Tea

Civic Centre  
19 February | 10am-2pm

## Singleton Combined Services Dinner

Singleton Diggers  
2 March

## Singleton International Women's Day Celebrations

Sacred Spaces at the Sisters of Mercy Convent  
6 March | 12pm

## Monthly Rally + Back to Pony Club Day

Singleton Pony Club Grounds  
8 March | 9am

## Hedweld Open to the Public – Facility Tours

5 Thrift Close, Mt Thorley  
13 March | 10am-12pm

## Singleton Lunch, Tennis + Croquet

Howe Park Tennis Club  
14 March | 12pm

## Open Day + Evensong at All Saints' Anglican Church

40 High Street, Singleton  
15 March | Church open all day; Evensong 6pm

## New Empire Ballroom Ragtime Dance Orchestra

Sisters' Chapel at Sacred Spaces at the Sisters of Mercy Convent  
Tickets include Convent-made afternoon tea  
15 March | 2pm

## Singleton Hospital Reunion

Singleton Hospital, Dangar Road Singleton  
15 March | 8.30am onwards

## Singleton Garden Viewing

"Hambledon Hill", 535 Hambledon Hill Road, Singleton  
15 March | 2-6pm

## Bushwalk Together

Catherine Vale Wines, 656 Milbrodale Road, Fordwich  
15 March | 10am-2pm

## Singleton Tidy Towns 2020 Garden Competition

Singleton local government area  
20 March | 6.30pm

## Singleton Emergency Services Expo

Civic Park  
28 March | 9am-12pm

## Presentation on the History of the Christian Israelite Church Community

Christian Israelite Church Hall, Goulburn Street Singleton  
29 March | 2pm

## Singleton High Tea + Fashion Parade

Singleton York Street Digger's Club  
4 April

## Singleton Show Rodeo

Singleton Showground  
2 May | 12pm

## Hunter Valley Food + Wine Festival

May + June

## 10th Putty Road Truck Drivers Memorial

Garry Miller Memorial Park, Putty Road Milbrodale  
16 May | Refreshments from 11am, Memorial Service 1pm

## Cystic Fibrosis Breathe Ball

Venue to be confirmed  
23 May | 6pm

## Singleton Business Excellence Awards

Club Singleton  
29 May | 6pm

## Singleton NAIDOC celebrations

Singleton Showground  
8 July | 10am-2pm

## High Tea in the Grand Hall

Mechanics Institute  
11 July | 2.30pm

## Presentation on the Ancestry of Founding Members of the Christian Israelite Church in Singleton

Christian Israelite Church Hall, Goulburn Street Singleton  
16 August | 2pm

## Glendon School of Arts Back in Time Devonshire Tea

Glendon Hall, Glendon Lane Glendon  
12 + 13 September

## Singleton Church Service and Presentation on the Lifestyle of Members of the Christian Israelite Church

Christian Israelite Church Hall, Goulbourn Street  
20 September | 3pm

## Singleton Show

Singleton Showground  
25, 26 + 27 September

## Hunter Coal Festival

Various times + locations  
23 October

## Singleton Show Campdraft

Singleton Showground  
24 + 25 October

singleton.nsw.gov.au



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